

LPA Partner Engagement Techniques

Engaging partners is all about building and maintaining relationships. It is not unlike the work you are doing with WorkFirst participants – it takes time and commitment. Here are some tried and true tips for LPA engagement:

- **Get to get to know the person and the organization they represent.** First, schedule some one-on-one time to provide the potential team member with information about your LPA. Take some time to also learn more about them and their organization. If they're a new partner, see if they would like to make a presentation at an upcoming LPA meeting. This investment of time will reap many benefits – you'll discover what they have to offer and what the partnership might be able to provide in return.
- **All good relationships require give and take.** It is a common mistake of LPAs to invite partners to meetings without addressing the "WIFMS" or *what's in it for me?* Partners stay engaged if they feel there is a benefit for being there. It's a good idea to periodically 'check-in' with partners on what they need from the LPA to make attending a 'value added' experience.
- **Build the agenda together.** People tend to be more engaged in meetings if they feel they have input on the agenda. An easy way to get input is to make time at the end of each meeting to gather items for the next meeting. Be sure to assign people to present and determine a timeframe for each item.
- **Respect each other's schedules and manage the meeting like a "well oiled machine".** Keep in mind, time is precious. No one likes to attend unorganized meetings that ramble on and last longer than expected. If you need more time to discuss an agenda item, ask the group whether they want to "push forward" on the item or defer further discussions until the next meeting.
- **Take notes, capture decisions, and assign names and dates.** There will be times when partners can not attend a meeting. Having a note taker capture the main points, decisions made, and assignments helps people stay engaged in the work of the LPA. No one likes to come to meetings unprepared – this is a way to keep them in the loop even when they miss a meeting.
- **Check-in regularly with your partners.** Everyone appreciates it when people check-in with them. Friendly calls or emails to touch base are a good way to make sure all partners are feeling engaged in the work of the LPA. Keep in mind, you will always have some partners who are more comfortable with one-on-one conversations vs. large group discussions.